

VZCZCXRO8059
OO RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0934/01 2911124
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 171124Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3576
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2362
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2480
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0990
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1758
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2113
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2534
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4966
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1629
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000934

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: PROTESTS LEAD TO BEATINGS, ARRESTS

REF: A. HARARE 592
[1](#)B. HARARE 479

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Two civil society groups led marches of 200 people each this week, drawing attention to the humanitarian crisis and crumbling educational infrastructure. In both instances, police beat protesters to disburse the groups and arrested those leading the marches. Despite the ongoing political negotiations and calls for unity, it appears "business as usual" prevails as police continue to use excessive force in the face of peaceful demonstrations. END SUMMARY.

Students Protest Crumbling Education

[1](#)2. (SBU) On October 14, approximately 200 youth, led by officers of the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU), marched to parliament to present a petition detailing their concerns about the state of education in Zimbabwe. The University of Zimbabwe remains closed, as there is still no water on campus. Riot police accompanied the students for several blocks and initially did not appear concerned with the march. On arrival at the parliament building, where the members were convening for their first session, two ZINASU leaders entered the building to present the petition and were arrested inside the building. Outside, police beat the students to disperse them. A third student outside, protesting the excessive use of force, was also arrested. One student fled and hid nearby; when police found her, they beat her until she lost consciousness. The three students who were arrested were released later that night after paying a fine. Medical personnel treated a total of 26 students, including one with a head injury who was held for observation and released the next morning.

WOZA Calls for National Disaster Declaration

¶3. (U) In Bulawayo on October 16, Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) and Men of Zimbabwe Arise (MOZA) led a march of about 200 people to Mhlahlandlela Government Complex to call on government to declare a national disaster and to demand immediate food aid for all Zimbabweans. They carried a declaration addressed to Zimbabwean leaders, Thabo Mbeki, and the SADC and AU Chairmen, calling on them to enact an agreement and put Zimbabweans ahead of their own needs. The declaration said, "we have lost patience with your kind of 'African solution'... If police officers arrest us or beat us as we make our demand, you must take it as another sign of your empty promises for a violence free Zimbabwe and an unfortunate African solution to silence and disrespect citizens."

¶4. (SBU) The protesters sat peacefully outside the building and sang songs including "this is an issue men are failing to solve". After about 45 minutes, riot police arrived and arrested WOZA leaders Jenni Williams and Magodonga Mahlangu and forcibly dispersed the rest of the crowd with batons, breaking one woman's finger. Seven women had been arrested at the beginning of the protest when police rounded up black market foreign currency dealers near the march's starting point and were released without charge later on October 16. As of the morning of October 17, Williams and Mahlangu remain in jail facing unknown charges. According to WOZA, Detective

HARARE 00000934 002 OF 002

Chief Inspector Ntini continues to deny the women's lawyer access to them.

¶5. (SBU) The WOZA protest came the day after 14 members were due to face trial for a May protest in Harare (reftels). In their previous court hearing on August 28, a Harare magistrate told the state prosecutor that the trial was set for October 15, and if the state was not ready to try the case, it would be removed from remand (essentially, removing it from the queue of cases to be tried). On October 15, the State insisted it was ready for trial, but that the docket was not available, so the trial could not yet proceed. The magistrate nevertheless removed the case from remand.

DHANANI